

## AN ARMY OFFICER ARRESTED

**REPORT CHARGED WITH FORGERY  
IN LOAN TRANSACTIONS.**

Alleged to Have Taken \$2,500 From Loan  
Brokers on Names of Brother Officers,  
Whom Antonio He Pledged to Meet  
at Hotel by Means of Proxy Letter

Allan Lafort, a First Lieutenant of the Coast Artillery, United States Army, was arrested last night in the King Edward Hotel, 155 West Forty-seventh street, after a scuffle with Lieut. Barney McConville and Post Office Inspector Nelson and taken down to Police Headquarters, where he

According to the police, **Lieut. Lefor** was dismissed Norton & Co., loan brokers, at Wheeling, W. Va., out of \$1,500, for forging the names of brother officers to applications for loans.

When taken into custody last night, Lefor had just received a decoy letter addressed to **Lieut.-Col. H. F. Hodgson**, of the Coast Artillery, who was recently appointed third assistant engineer of the Panama Canal. Before **McConville** and **Nelson** could get possession of the letter, he tore it up and scattered the pieces over the floor of the hotel corridor.

It appears that **Norton & Co.** have been making a business of lending army officers money on their salaries, and **Lieut. Lefor**

of some financial scrape. In his applications for loans he forged the names of Lieut.-Col. Hodges, Col. William L. Marshall of the Corps of Engineers, Washington, D. C., Major H. Jervoy of the Coast Artillery, Major Fred Marsh, Col. C. A. P. Hatfield and Capt. G. P. White of the Sixth Cavalry. In each instance, the police say, he pledged the salaries of his superiors and collected the money from the loan brokers.

On October 5, 1906, in the name of Major Marsh, he made application for a loan of \$1,500, pledging the Major's salary as security.

I hereby agree on my honor, if alive, to assign and pledge my salary from the United States Government for the month of October, on or before the last day of said month, and to transmit a check for said amount to Norton & Co., New York City.

Norton & Co. looked up the Navy Register and found that there was in existence a Major Marsh, and without any hesitation they forwarded to Fort Slem, where the late Lieut. Leofort has stationed, the first installment of the loan. Then there followed an application signed "Lieut.-Colonel H. F. Hodges, Coast Artillery, Washington, D. C., without any hesitation the money was sent and my mortgage was paid."

replay was received a few days later:

"I enclose your notes duly executed. I thank you very much for the favor. Your terms are very favorable. Yours truly,  
H. S. Hodges."

Grand Union Hotel, Washington, D. C.

The applications both in the name of Major Marsh and Col. Hodges bore the alleged indorsement of Col. C. A. P. Hatfield, Fort Meyer, Va., and Norton & Co. didn't have the slightest suspicion that there was anything wrong. They forwarded a New York city draft payable to Major Marsh on the American Exchange Bank of New York, drawn through the National Builders' Loan Association of Wheeling, W. Va.

This draft never reached Major Marsh, but was intercepted and later cashed at the American Exchange Bank in this city. The description of the man who cashed it, according to the police, tallies with that of Lieut. Lefort.

Norton & Co. signed "Captain G. P. White, Sixth Cavalry, Fort Slocum," requesting a loan of \$750 the firm became suspicious. They had done business with Capt. White, who was in the Philippines at the time, and they were familiar with his handwriting, and when their suspicion was thoroughly aroused they decided to investigate. They communicated with Lieut. Col. Hatfield and asked him if he had endorsed any notes. He denied that he had, and when shown the notes that Leford had sent he branded them as forgeries. The firm then employed a handwriting expert, who pronounced all the signatures forgeries.

been made out by the same person and the endorsements and the names signed to the notes were forgeries. No attempt had been made to disguise the handwriting and for the police last night could not account for the action of Norton & Co. in letting their applications go through.

When the money brokers discovered that they had been duped they put the matter into the hands of J. D. W. King of 20 Littleton street, representing the bureau of information of the Bankers Association. Mr. King communicated with Inspector McCaffery and the Post Office authorities.

When the letter carrier delivered the mail at the hotel last night there was a letter for Lieut. Nelson. As one of the in-

had just opened it when Nelson and McConville sprang at him. Before they could take the letter from him he had torn it up and had scattered the pieces over the floor.

The decoy letter was addressed to Lieutenant Col. Hodges, in care of the King Edward

Hotel. The detectives say that it was the only mail handed to Lefort. It was supposed to have contained the second installment of \$500, which had been due several

Lefort, who was unaware of the trap that had been set for him, eagerly took it from the postman.

Lefort admitted that he had received money from Norton & Co. but he declared

that he acted for a man named Buck, who, he said, had told him that it was easy to fool the "money sharks." He denied that he intended to get his superior officers into any trouble. He told his captors that he

Lieut. Lefort enlisted in the Fifth Artillery in 1886 and won his commission in 1901, when he was appointed Second Lieutenant. At the

Thirtieth United States Volunteer. He was transferred to the Regular Army and attached to the Artillery Corps. In 1898 he was appointed First Lieutenant.